THE LOGICAL ILLUMINATION OF INDIAN MYSTICISM

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It is sad that death has taken Professor Zaehner so suddenly from our midst. During his time as Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, Professor Zaehner published a large number of books and articles, and actively participated in many live issues of today in the field of religion, philosophy, morality, and mysticism. He initiated many controversial discussions in the field of drugs, the typology of mysticism, and religion and modern society. Of his many concerns, I wish to choose two main problems for discussion this evening. My choice has been guided by considering not only the purpose of the Spalding Professorship at Oxford but also the avowed interest of my two predecessors, R. C. Zaehner and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

First, Professor Zaehner profoundly, and I think justifiably, disagreed with such persons as Aldous Huxley concerning the value of mysticism ('oriental mysticism', to be sure) as a *philosophia perennis*. Second, Professor Zaehner entertained some deep-seated misgivings about the implicit amorality of a monistic metaphysical position, which is regarded as the bedrock of eastern mysticism. My comments this evening will be broadly related to these two major issues.

Mystical doctrines that arise from Vedānta, Buddhism, Zen, and Taoism, Professor Zaehner argued, speak of a timeless state of Being, which transcends good and evil, right and wrong, and all the opposites and contradictions, that bedevil human life. The thinking of the Pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece was, in this respect, remarkably similar to that of the Indian philosophers and mystics. But a very important and striking contrast between

eastern mysticism and mysticism in the Christian tradition is that the latter, unlike the former, is overwhelmingly God-orientated. The metaphysical foundation of eastern mysticism is centered upon beliefs that are often expressed as 'All is One and One is All' and 'The One IS, all else is illusion'. Professor Zaehner argued that there is a moral ambivalence in these thoughts so deep-seated that it may lead to disastrous results in our everyday behaviour. He contended, for instance, that the gruesome murders perpetrated by Charles Manson and the 'Family', which shocked the world in 1969, were simply an example of the extremes to which we can be led by the amorality of monism expressed in such phrases as 'the union of opposites' and 'transcendence of good and evil'.[1]

I will start with a remark made by Professor Zaehner in his last book. Observing that the so called perennial philosophy of the union of opposites is expounded alike by Heraclitus and the Upaniṣads, he went on to say, 'But it (the perennial philosophy) needs to be rigorously checked by the rational mind which it would destroy' *(Our Savage God,* p. 102). In the same vein, he glorified Aristotle as the intellectual father of the Western world, 'for he was the first to think analytically about mystical experience, finding thereby the only truly human answer to the mystery because his answer was reached by thought, which alone distinguishes man from other animals, not by ecstasy and Platonic madness.'[2] Following the lead suggested in the few lines just quoted, I wish to attempt a rational presentation of some philosophical doctrines of India that are usually associated with mysticism: Advaita Vedānta and Māhāyana Buddhism. Although my own philosophic conviction is different and forces me to be critical of monistic metaphysics (and in this regard, I find myself in agreement with my immediate predecessor), it seems undeniable that a number of respectable writers on Advaita and Mādhyamika in ancient and medieval India examined their own doctrines as well as those of their rivals in the light of reason and logic. My attempt here is to show how this has been done, and with what success.

The idea of mysticism has mystified many of us, including Professor Zaehner. His attempt to understand the phenomenon was commendable. In today's world, we have a bewildering variety of publications on Advaita Vedānta and Māhāyana Buddhism along with a widespread proliferation of some popular forms of these two religious systems—so bewildering, that an academic or professional philosopher today may hesitate to embark on a serious discussion of these two systems. This is a pity, for these two systems of Indian philosophy were in fact as serious as any philosophical system, either in the East or in the West. When one reads any standard original text of either Advaita or Mādhyamika philosophy, one cannot but admire greatly the intellectual honesty and professional sophistication of its author. In contrast, numerous modern publications are remarkable for the sheer obscurity and inanity of their presentation, and, as Professor Zaehner has regretted,[3] the intelligent layman in the West (and, I might add, in the East too) seems to be swallowing book after book of this kind. And this only lends support to the wellknown maxim of Tertullian: *Credo quia absurdum,* 'I believe it because it is absurd'.

To prove my point about the seriousness and professionalism of Indian mystical philosophers, I will deal with two standard texts, in particular: Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and Śrīharṣa's *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya.* A brief review of a few points described in either of these two texts will, I think, dispel any illusion that the so called Indian mysticism is fairly represented by the vague generalities and naïve beliefs that we often hear today.

Whatever one may feel about the content of the doctrines of the philosophers I have mentioned, one cannot help appreciating and thinking highly of the form in which they were put. One can go even further: the form itself tells us something

that is generally overlooked in present-day discussions of these doctrines, and that is that these authors intended their writings to be available for rational discussion. They were in fact writing for intelligent and critically minded readers and not pleading for the silence of mystic communion. I firmly believe that the very form in which these texts have been cast acts as an invitation to scholars and intellectuals to examine them dispassionately and in the light of reason.

First of all, let us note that these texts were written in correct and technical Sanskrit. And Sanskrit is a very difficult language (in all probability, it was not a spoken language when these texts were composed). It was a language that could be learned, not in any transcendental state of euphoria, but only after years of formal study of its grammar and syntax.[4] This, in my opinion, already acted as a 'corrective' check on the class of people whom these authors were addressing and writing for.

Second, these authors used formal arguments—Indian syllogistic forms, to be sure—at almost every step of their discourse. They clothed their doctrines in a technical (logical) vocabulary that presupposed a thorough-going and systematic training in logic and the *pramāṇa-śāstra* (epistemology or the study of the means of knowledge). In fact the vocabulary of the *pramāṇa-śāstra* implies a universe of discourse that not only is commonly shared by all the different schools of Indian philosophy but also tends to be global in its meaning. If we use 'logic' in a broad and liberal sense, then, as I have argued elsewhere, it would be difficult to talk about any inherent distinction between Indian logic and Western logic.[5] And these authors, apart from everything else, were astute logicians (in, at least, an Indian sense of the term). Thus, nobody who had not spent several years in formal study of the technical vocabularies of Indian logic would find it easy to follow these texts, much less to comprehend and criticize these doctrines. This probably acted as an additional corrective check upon

readers. In brief, these texts were very far from being rhapsodies of mystical experience, or what Professor Zaehner called 'ecstacy and Platonic madness'.

While I stress the value of the form of these texts, I am nevertheless aware that human beings crave content. And I am certainly not one to shirk the substance of these texts while only praising their form. For indeed these works do intend to convey a message, and that message is often more than strictly philosophical. I consider it my duty as a scholar to make this message as clear and as forceful as it must originally have appeared to these authors themselves. This is by no means a simple task.

Nāgārjuna wrote his *Mādhyamika-kārikā* primarily to show the essentially conditional and provisional nature of the *dharma* theory of the Abhidharma school, and along with this he wanted to expose the necessarily provisional nature of any philosophic theory of reality. Nāgārjuna argued: A thing is always without its own-nature *(svabhāva)*, empty or devoid of what may be termed its essence or being. For the assumption that a thing has its own-nature runs contrary to our empirical evidence as well as to our reasoning. Experience reveals the happening of events only, no own-nature, no essence. The own-nature (which, with some reservations, can be rendered as the essence) of a thing is conceived as the unchanging, underlying core, and this conception is held by Nāgārjuna to be incompatible with the commonsense notion as well as the philosophic notion of change.

Nāgārjuna used the familiar paradox of causation, i.e., the paradox of change and permanence. This paradox, according to Nāgārjuna, shows that a thing cannot possess its own-nature; its essence. If a thing has its own-nature it cannot change, for that would go against the presumed unchangeability of own-nature; and if the thing does not have its own-nature then change cannot take place either, for 'change' means transformation of the own-nature into something else.[6]

Nāgārjuna's argument can be briefly stated as follows. Everything is empty or devoid of its own-nature because everything is 'dependently originating'. The implicit premiss is that the own-nature of things and the fact of their dependent origination cannot go together. The presence of one implies the absence of the other. It is also suggested by Nāgārjuna's argument that the fact of dependent origination of things (viz., A arises when B is there) is given to us by experience (and the Buddhist is simply drawing our attention to this fact of experience), and the own-nature is an *a priori* assumption. And thus, since one contradicts the other the Mādhyamika draws the conclusion that all things are empty (of their own-nature).

In the *Vigraha-vyāvartanī,* Nāgārjuna raises a fundamental issue in philosophy. It is in fact a basic problem in the philosophy of logic, Indian logic, to be sure. Posing as a Nyāya opponent Nāgārjuna asks the following question: If everything (including statements) is empty then the statement that states that everything is empty is also empty and thus loses its assertive force or its claim to truth. And, if this latter statement is not intended to be empty then one has to state the ground for such a preferential treatment of this particular statement (i.e., one has to explain why, while all other statements are empty, this particular one is not so).[7] Nāgārjuna says that a disputant in this case can formulate three pairs of alternatives *(ṣaṭkoṭika-vāda),*[8] which I shall expound below. 'Everything is empty' is actually a negative statement, a negation *(pratiṣedha),* for it is a rephrasing of 'nothing has its own-nature'. Now the first two alternatives are suggested as follows:[9] (If everything is empty then)

1. the above negation is itself empty, does not have its own-nature, and thus it is improper *(anupapanna),* FALSE,

or 2. the negation itself is not empty, it does have its own-nature, and thus it is not improper, it is TRUE.

Note that if 1 is accepted, Nāgārjuna fails to convey the truth

that he is supposed to convey. If, however, 2 is accepted then we have a *partially* paradoxical situation, viz., if this negation is true then it is also false because the negation is also included in 'everything'.

The second pair of alternatives is formulated as follows:

3. Everything is empty, but this negation is not empty (i.e., TRUE); 'Everything' does not include this negation.
4. This negation, along with everything else, lacks its own-nature, is FALSE.

Note that 3 accords a special status to the negation in question, for it says, in fact, that everything *except* this negation is empty. Thus, the opponent is justified in asking for the ground on which such exception is to be made *(viśeṣahetuś ca vaktavyaḥ).* With 4, we are back to the same problem as with 1, namely, Nāgārjuna fails to communicate his message.

The third pair is stated as follows:

5. The negation is also empty (false) just as everything else, but even so it successfully conveys its meaning.
6. Everything except this negation is empty, and therefore the negation successfully conveys its meaning.

There is very little difference between 3 and 6. But 5 obviously leads to the awkward position that even a false negation can successfully negate. If this is admitted then one might as well stipulate that even a false thing can function successfully.

To simplify matters for our discussion, let me substitute for the statement of Nāgārjuna, 'Nothing has its own-nature' (I will call it NS), the statement 'No statement is true' or 'All statements are false'. Instead of talking about *things* we talk about statements. As far as I can see, this does not misinterpret his philosophical motivation, for instead of referring to the 'world of things' we are referring to the 'world of statements'. Thus, the 'own-nature' of a thing is represented here

by the *truth* of a statement, and the lack of 'own-nature' by the *falsity* (lack of truth) of the statement. In fact, a Nāgārjunian might happily agree to translate 'Everything is empty' as 'Every statement is false', for all statements may be viewed as *prapañca* and therefore belonging to the *samvṛti* level, which will imply that they are false from the point of view of the *paramārtha* or Ultimate reality.

Let us assume that NS = 'No statement is true'.

We will now be in a better position to locate the logical difficulties which the 'emptiness' doctrine of Nāgārjuna might possibly face and also to find a way out of those difficulties. It is difficult not to recall the ancient Liar paradox of Epimenides, who apparently said, himself being a Cretan, that all Cretans are liars (this is, at least, taken to be one version of the Liar paradox). But I shall try to avoid any facile comparison between the two, and instead limit myself to the logical problems raised by NS in the Indian context. It will be noted that NS may be paradoxical but is not a proper antinomy.[10]

If NS is asserted to be true, we have already a counter-example which will make NS false. In other words, as long as NS is itself counted as a statement, if we claim it to be true, we will be forced to admit its falsity. But this is not properly antinomical, for if we assume NS to be false, we do not have any way of deducing from this assumption that it is true. Thus, we can, and obviously Nāgārjuna can, consistently hold NS to be false. But then we are obliged (and so is Nāgārjuna) to answer at least two further questions. First, if NS is false, it fails to communicate the message of Nāgārjuna. Note this is what is actually claimed by the opponent of Nāgārjuna in the above alternatives 1 and 4. In Indian terminology, NS, under this interpretation, is no longer a *deśanā*, it does not serve any purpose. Second, to suppose that NS is false is also to suppose logically its contradictory, i.e., 'Some statement is true' to be true. Translated back in the 'thing-talk', we will have to say

that if we suppose 'Everything is empty' to be itself empty, we will have to admit at least one non-empty thing, i.e., one thing that does not lack its own-nature. Now, to hold that some statement is true, we are committed to presuppose the existence of a true statement, different from NS. If the argument so far has been right, it will then seem possible for us to settle an empirical question on logical grounds. Note that there is no logical incompatibility in supposing that NS is the only statement in a Nāgārjunian world. But we cannot count NS to be false unless there exists another true statement in that world (a contingent fact). Note that although the opponent to alternative 5 above does not explicitly raise this point it is nevertheless an implicit difficulty in alternative 5.

To avoid the above problem, we might use an *exceptive* clause (see alternatives 3 and 6), and say that NS is:

'No statement except this one is true.'

This way of avoiding the problem arising from self-reference will not lead us to any logical difficulties;[12] but the opponent will still press Nāgārjuna to supply a factual reason for this exception. Nāgārjuna, in this respect, does not enjoy the privilege that is apparently available to Epimenides. Epimenides, for example, can claim that all Cretans except himself are liars, and hence the paradox will disappear. But Nāgārjuna's situation is different. If NS is said to have a special, in fact unique, status of being true while all other statements are false, the opponent will insist that NS cannot in that case be considered to be a statement. This is what is actually meant by the technical fault called *dṛṣṭāntāsiddhi.* The said fault has at least two consequences. First, the NS in this case would be an entirely solipsistic statement which nobody will be able to understand. Second, if all statements except NS are false, then falsity becomes a necessary character of a statement, and thus it would not be proper any more to call NS a statement. The underlying principle is this: if all members except one, say *a,* of a class possess a property, then there

is a very strong reason to disqualify *a* from the membership of that class. This argument is sound as long as we talk in terms of natural classes (where membership is subject to empirical discovery).

To assist Nāgārjuna, we may note that he has a very easy way out. For he can consistently hold that no statement is true without ever asserting NS.[13] Although this seems to be his final position, it is interesting to see how he eventually reaches it. He observes:

> 'Therefore, just as my statement is empty, all things are empty. And hence the lack of own-nature of all things is proven in both ways.' *Vv.*, p. 127, ll. 6-7.

This would appear to be a quibble. Is Nāgārjuna saying that if a negation *(pratiṣedha)* is false, it only intensifies the force of that negation? No, for that would be a very odd view and would deny the practical validity and utility of logic. Nāgārjuna is in fact trying to say something else:

> 'If I had propounded a thesis to be proven *(pratijñā)*, certainly then I would be at fault. But I do not propound any thesis to be proven, and therefore I am surely not at fault.' *Vv.*, v. 29

If this is not satisfactory, Nāgārjuna continues:

> 'Thus, as long as all things are empty, completely unarising *(?upaśānta)* and devoid of any essence, how can a statement qualify to be a thesis to be proven? And if so, how can any fault attach to us—a fault such as the disqualification of a statement from being considered as a thesis?' *Vv.*, p. 127 ll. 19-20

Briefly, if NS is claimed to be a thesis, it can be either proved or disproved, be either accepted or rejected. But since Nāgārjuna does not make such a claim, the attack of the opponent would be wide of the mark. Moreover:

> 'If I (wish to) establish any fact through such means of knowledge as perception, I would offer it for either acceptance or rejection. But since I do not, you cannot refute my point.' *Vv.*, v. 30

Nāgārjuna's point seems to be this. Only a proposition can be true or false. But since NS is not claimed as a proposition, we cannot even begin to think of its contradictory, viz., 'some statement is true'. Thus, Nāgārjuna has almost turned the tables against his opponent. But one may now suspect that he is trying to score a point only by leaving us in the quicksand of a very strange philosophic debate—a debate where the winner wins only by violating the ground rules! If Nāgārjuna did not have any position or proposition to defend, why did he enter the debate in the first place? He has two different answers to this charge. The first answer is somewhat illuminating, for it explains what the Mādhyamika philosophy is all about, while the second is posed as a counter-question.

Nāgārjuna first says that NS can provisionally be proposed as a thesis for a debate only from the point of view of *saṃvyavahāra*, conventional or provisional reality.

> 'We do not, in fact cannot, make our point without having recourse to *saṃvyavahāra* (= *saṃvṛti*).' *Vv.*, v. 28cd.

In the *Mādhyamika-kārikā*, he has already emphasized that there are two levels of truth: the *saṃvṛti* or the provisional and the *paramārtha* or the ultimate. The Buddha has taught his doctrine in terms of these two levels of truth. Nāgārjuna repeats here:

> 'We cannot state that all things are empty without recourse to ordinary human behaviour (i.e. an utterance). For the teaching of the doctrine *(dharma-deśanā)* cannot be conducted without recourse to *vyavahāra*.' *Vv.* p. 127, ll. 1-3

To explain: The teacher-philosopher has only two choices. He can remain silent, but then he fails in his duty as a teacher and no longer remains true to his profession. Or, he can teach his doctrine using the ordinary vehicle of communication, i.e., speech, but he can do so only at the risk of being misunderstood and misinterpreted. In the first case, he cannot instruct the disciples at all, and in the second case, he runs the risk of

misleading his disciples. Nāgārjuna clearly prefers the second alternative: the risk of a wrong lead is better than no lead at all! Thus, the force of *vyavahāra* is admitted, and Nāgārjuna enters into the debate. Now, if he seems to be misleading or not following the ground rules, it is, according to him, the fault of the medium he has chosen, and the medium has been chosen in the absence of any better alternative.

Nāgārjuna's second reply comes in terms of a counter-offensive. The opponent accepts certain *ad hoc* rules of a philosophic debate. The debater states his position, viz., a thesis to be proven or disproven. He also accepts a system of *pramāṇas,* means of knowledge, by means of which he intends to prove (or disprove) his thesis. His crucial assumption is that there are means of knowledge or *pramāṇas,* which establish facts or truths *(arthas* or *prameyas)* expressed by the thesis. Nāgārjuna argues:

> 'If those facts are established through the means of knowledge *(pramāṇas),* tell me then how those means of knowledge are themselves established?'
>
> 'If the means of knowledge are established by another set of means of knowledge, infinite regress follows. For the first cannot be established, nor the middle, nor the last.' *Vv.,* vv. 31, 32.

To avoid this quandary, the opponent might say that the means of knowledge are self-validating or self-established, and hence they do not need anything else to establish or validate them. But then, Nāgārjuna argues, the means of knowledge would enjoy a unique status in this world, for while everything else stands in need of being proven by a means of knowledge, they themselves do not. Now the tables seem to be turned against the opponent, for Nāgārjuna can ask him to explain the ground for according such a unique status to the *pramāṇas,* means of knowledge. Remember Nāgārjuna himself did not claim anything more than this for NS, viz., a

special status, so that NS can convey its meaning without itself being considered as either true or false.

The opponent apparently has two other alternatives open to him: (a) He may say that one means of knowledge is validated[14] by another means of knowledge. But then he will have to admit that at least one means of knowledge is self-validating. (b) He may claim that a means of knowledge is validated by the truth or fact it reveals, and the fact it reveals is validated by that very means of knowledge. But then Nāgārjuna has placed his opponent where he actually wanted him to be. The means of knowledge and the truths they reveal thus stand together and fall together. To establish a truth you need the means of knowledge, and to validate the means of knowledge you need a truth. This, Nāgārjuna insists, spells out only a variety of the vicious circle.[15]

This may remind us of the old and rather trivial controversy of the chicken and the egg. But Nāgārjuna's point is not necessarily trivial. He is not asking 'Which came first? the chicken or the egg?' He raises instead a pertinent question, viz., if one asserts that the *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) establish the *prameyas* (truths), is it not then equally possible to assert that the *prameyas* validate the *pramāṇas?* Or, to use the well-known simile of Nāgārjuna, if one can say that the father generates the son, it is then equally sayable that the son generates the father, for without a son how could one be a father?[16] The point of all this is that the opponent's almost unflinching confidence in the *pramāṇa* system as the best method of establishing truths, is hereby shown to be based upon some very questionable hypotheses, and he is forced to abandon his insistence that a philosophic debate should strictly be conducted and regulated by a *pramāṇa* system.

The textual tradition of ancient India speaks generally of three types of 'formal' philosophic debate: *vāda, jalpa,* and *vitaṇḍā.*[17] The first is said to be characterized by what may be called the philosopher's search for the truth. This type of

debate is used to explain and clarify some philosophic position (thesis) to those who wish to understand it (e.g., the pupils). Each debate has two sides: the proponent and opponent. In the *vāda* type of debate, however, both sides are committed to find a correct position and establish the same with the help of accredited means of knowledge *(pramāṇa)* as well as by valid hypothetical, or inductive, or dialectical reasoning *(tarka)*. Here, a position is defended only with valid reasoning and refutation is conducted by locating fallacies in the counter thesis. This debate is concluded as soon as the truth is established.

The second type of debate *(jalpa)* is characterized not so much by the philosopher's search for the truth as by the disputant's drive for victory. Thus, in the second type, not only valid reasonings, etc., are applied, but also, to ensure victory over the opponent, sophistry and trickery become part of the rules of the game. Each side tries to establish a thesis and refute a counter thesis, and victory can be achieved, as in war, by either fair or unfair means. A false rejoinder or a criticism to confuse the opponent or to confute the issue is permissible in this debate.

The third type of debate *(vitaṇḍā)* is cryptically described in the Nyāyasūtra 1.2.44 as one that is concerned with only the refutation of the thesis but not with the establishment of any counter thesis or counter position. It is a negative debate where the disputant's responsibility lies only in refutation. Commentators from Vātsyāyana onwards remarked that *vitaṇḍā*, i.e. this third kind, is no better than useless wrangling and is a very disreputable form of debate. In other words, this debate has all the faults of the second form of debate *(jalpa)* but lacks all the virtues of the first type. Vātsyāyana maintained that *vitaṇḍā* is actually an embarrassment to the philosophers, and that it is even worse than *jalpa*, for the victory in this form of debate is not only unfair but also undeserved. It is an inglorious victory, for the debater in this case

enjoys an unfair advantage which is not allowed to his opponent. The debater is exclusively concerned with finding fault with the opponent's thesis, but the opponent cannot do the same, for the debater may have no thesis of his own or no position to defend.[18]

But in spite of the denunciation of *vitaṇḍā* by Vātsyāyana, many respectable philosophers regarded this negative form of debate as a very useful and effective philosophic method. In fact, *vitaṇḍā* is not necessarily a futile wrangling. Even Akṣapāda Gotama did not think so. According to him, as we have seen above, a vitaṇḍā consists not in defending any view but in refuting another view. Thus, while determination of truth is the goal of the first type *(vāda)* and victory is the goal of the second type *(jalpa)*, the goal of the third type (*vitaṇḍā*) is either of them or both. For, the mystic or the monistic philosopher may take the position that the refutation of wrong views will be tantamount to the establishment of the truth. In other words, for the mystic, the truth is self-evident as soon as the veils of wrong views are lifted. And if truth is established in this negative way, victory is also achieved. This interpretation of *vitaṇḍā* (contrary to Vātsyāyana's comment) is supported even by some Naiyāyikas, e.g., Sānātanī.[19]

Mystics and monistic philosophers of India used *vitaṇḍā* or negative argumentation as a very fruitful philosophic activity. And in this regard they were joined by the Cārvāka sceptics and the agnostics. Monistic philosophers generally believed in an Ultimate Reality which is ineffable in principle. Thus, the ultimate reality cannot directly be the subject of any philosophic discourse (which is only *prapañca)*. Faced with this problem, the monistic philosophers chose *vitaṇḍā*, i.e., the respectable form of the negative argumentation that I have discussed above, as an expedient to communicate their message. We may doubt whether Nāgārjuna can strictly be called a mystic. But we cannot doubt that he expounded the *tattva* (truth) simply by not talking about it:

'Not a word was uttered by you, O Master, and (yet) all the disciples are refreshed (satisfied) by the shower of (your teaching of) *dharma*.'[20]

One of the effective ways of conducting *vitaṇḍā*, i.e. the negative form of philosophic debate, is to use the well-known pattern of philosophic argument called *prasaṅga*. That Nāgārjuna greatly favoured the use of *prasaṅga* can hardly be denied.[21] The prasaṅga form of argument, which I am inclined to translate as *reductio ad absurdum*, is very suitable for the destructive use which the debater in *vitaṇḍā* is particularly interested in. Briefly the method is this. The debater takes the purported thesis of the opponent, or a set of interrelated ideas or concepts accepted by the opponent (such as, motion, time, and causality), and deduces from it (logical) consequences which would be shown to be *either* inconsistent with the original thesis or the original set of concepts, *or* decidedly absurd in the light of our everyday experience. Thus, the original position of the opponent will be reduced to a nonsensical claim. I recommend *reductio ad absurdum* as a translation of *prasaṅga*, for the method is strikingly similar to the *reductio ad absurdum* described by Professor Gilbert Ryle in his Inaugural Lecture at Oxford: 'A pattern of argument which is proper and even proprietary to philosophy is the *reductio ad absurdum*. This argument moves by extracting contradictions or logical paradoxes from its material.'[22] Ryle distinguished the weak Euclidean *reductio* from the strong *reductio* that is generally used by philosophers. In Euclidean reduction, the truth of a theorem is proved by deducing from it contradictory consequences which are in conflict with the axioms of the system or with consequences drawn from them. Here the truth of the theorem is made dependent upon the assumption of the truth of the axioms. It is weak in the sense that it shows only that either the theorem is true if the axioms are true or that both are false.

Prasaṅga, like the strong reduction, is a tool for the

refutation of the opponent's position in a debate. Ryle compared strong reduction with 'destruction-tests' of the engineers and physicists to determine the strength and usefulness of metals etc. He has, however, argued that there is a constructive side to the strong *reductio*. For, he says, 'Absurdities are the original goad to philosophical thinking; they continue to be its scalpel' (p. 12). He also compared strong *reductio* with the threshing operation by which chaff is separated and discarded and grain is collected. But I believe, a Nāgārjuna or a Śrīharṣa would hesitate to assign such a positive character to the *prasaṅga* as 'collecting the grain' after the threshing. Rather, it would be urged by an Indian *prāsaṅgika* that after the flail with its winnowing fan has blown away the chaff of misconception and wrong thesis, the truth will shine by itself in its own glory. *Prasaṅga* and *vitaṇḍā* cannot tell us what is true or what exists, but they can certainly tell us, if they are properly employed, what is not true and what does not exist.

Śrīharṣa in the Advaita Vedānta tradition was a worthy successor of Nāgārjuna in the use of the above method as an essential part of philosophic activity. Śrīharṣa was an original thinker of the Vedanta school. He had the boldness to claim—and he made good his claim—that as far as philosophical method is concerned there exists very little difference between a Mādhyamika and a Advaita-Vedāntin, or even between a mystic and a Cārvāka nihilist.

The *reductio* is not the only form of argument used by philosophers, a point already conceded by Ryle.[23] We can think of philosophers as divided into two main groups: the *prāsaṅgika* (the vitaṇḍin) and the *pramāṇa-vādin*. The first group consists of those who use only the *reductio* and the negative form of debate, while the second group comprises those who would establish, in addition to the *reductio*, a system of *pramāṇas* or accredited means of knowledge on the basis of which they would construct a system. One of the platitudes of the *pramāṇa-vādin*, i.e., the second group of

philosophers, is that a philosophic debate cannot properly begin unless both parties entering it first admit that *pramāṇas*—i.e., means of knowledge such as perception and inference, and logical fallacies—are acceptable realities. For it is only with the help of such concepts that a philosophic debate can properly proceed. This was the well expressed view of Vātsyāyana and many *pramāṇa-vādins* against the negative form of debate.

Śrīharṣa, in the beginning of his *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya,* attacks the above platitude and, in order to reject it, he first resolves it into four possible alternative meanings: the platitude may mean

1) that debaters who do not admit a *pramāṇa* system are unable to start a debate,

or, 2) that the *pramāṇas* are directly related to the debate as cause to its effect,

or, 3) that it is the practice of all people and philosophers alike first to accept a system of *pramāṇas* and then to enter a philosophic debate,

or, 4) that without the acceptance of *pramāṇas* and logical fallacies, the twin goal of a debate, viz., the establishment of truth and determination of victory, will never be achieved. *(Kk.* p. 6)

Śrīharṣa rejects, as anyone could have guessed, all the four alternatives.

The first alternative is untenable, for such philosophers as Cārvāka and Mādhyamika do enter into serious philosophic debates despite their refusal to admit the existence of a *pramāṇa* system. Indeed, if such debates did not exist, your attempt (i.e., the attempt of a *pramāṇa-vādin)* to refute such debates (viz., *vitaṇḍā)* would be the most unusual behaviour (on your part). *(Kk.* p. 7)

Śrīharṣa argues that it is in fact unfair to shut the door of the philosophic debating room to someone just because of his

prior refusal to accept a *pramāṇa* system. *(Kk.* p. 7)

'You seem to be using the refusal to admit the existence of *pramāṇas* as a new kind of silencing charm. But did not Bṛhaspati, in spite of this charm, write the *Lokāyata-sūtras?* Did not the Buddha also teach the Mādhyamika texts (debating against the rival philosophers)? And did not Śaṅkara write his commentary on the *sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa?'

One may note that citation of the above counter examples by Śrīharṣa eventually proves that alternatives 2 and 3 are also wrong.

The opponent might rejoin that these counter examples do not constitute real philosophical debates since they are incapable of proving or disproving anything. For as long as the *pramāṇas,* etc., are not admitted nothing can strictly be proved or disproved. Anticipating this rejoinder, Śrīharṣa replies as follows. First, one may enter a debate only by *provisionally* accepting some *pramāṇas* and logical fallacies. But this provisional acceptance *(abhyupagama)* on his part does not entail acceptance of the existence of *pramāṇas,* etc. For, by using prasaṅga or *reductio* the debater can show that if the opponent accepts a *pramāṇa,* say *p,* then the logical consequence of *p* will *either* be inconsistent with *p* (directly or indirectly) *or* it will be patently absurd. This expedient of provisional acceptance seems to be an echo of Nāgārjuna's appeal to the *vyavahāra* level of truth for making possible a philosophical discourse.

Second, Śrīharṣa insists that even such a provisional acceptance is not essential to the debater's position. True, in the context of a debate, we need to determine what counts as good and successful argument and what counts as bad and unsuccessful argument. But a Mādhyamika or a Cārvāka will remain satisfied as long as he can determine that certain arguments are invalid. Thus, a Mādhyamika or a Cārvāka is qualified to enter into a debate if he is capable of locating

some logical defects (fallacies) in the opponent's argument. He can very well maintain an indifferent attitude *(udāsīna)* toward the *pramāṇas*. For it is the opponent who will need the service of *pramāṇas* to establish the truth of his claim. The opponent such as the Naiyāyika cannot be satisfied, as apparently the Mādhyamika or the Vedāntin debater can, with devising a refutation of the refutation devised already by his rival. For while inconsistency (or absurdity) may guarantee the falsity of one's claim, consistency does not guarantee its truth. Only a *pramāṇa* can establish such a truth.

Moreover, Śrīharṣa argues, even the fourth alternative given above is wrong. For, in debate there will be a neutral judge *(madhyastha)* who will decide who has won. If he finds that one debater (be he a Mādhyamika or a Cārvāka) has not violated the conventional rules of the debate while the other has done so, he will declare the first as victorious. And this does not entail, as far as Śrīharṣa can see, that the victorious debater must first accept a system of *pramāṇas*. If you now ask the victorious debater how then the truth is to be established, he will shrug it off by pointing out that truths are self-evident. When the chaff is winnowed away, only the grain of truth remains.

I have now concluded my illustrative exposition of the uses of logic and arguments made by the so called mystical philosophers of India. Let me come back to my original theme. My personal philosophical view does not, I must admit, coincide with that of either Mahāyāna Buddhism or Advaita Vedānta. But I must emphasize at the same time that these two philosophical systems of the East were not the work of fools. I think I have given enough evidence already to show that neither of the two systems constituted a philosophy of 'woolly ideas', as is sometimes thought today. Of course, there are texts containing a popular and poetic presentation of these systems. And the emotional appeal of such presentation can strike chords untouched by the debate of Śrīharṣa or rational

arguments of Nāgārjuna. The religious literature of the East is very rich in this respect. There are unique passages from the Upaniṣads, for example, which are grand, elevating, and enjoyable irrespective of their claim to truth. For many they represent genuine expressions of mystical experience. For others, they embody metaphysical speculations, for still others poetry. Thousands of other religious texts have been written in this manner. There is naturally a danger that uncritical appraisal of these texts may degenerate into inanities. But the critical philosophers of India, who were also mystically inclined, often made mysticism philosophically attractive and intellectually stimulating. I have tried to show how serious was their attempt, and how near they came to succeeding in it. Even without sharing the philosophical views of Buddhism and Vedānta, one can very well appreciate their aesthetic appeal, their beauty, and their grandeur.

From a philosophical point of view, one may argue that no dispassionate judgement is possible without proper analysis and clarification of the doctrine we wish to judge. In order even to criticize these doctrines, one needs to understand them clearly. Thus the spirit of what I have called in another context 'intellectual non-violence' has been shown surprisingly and conspicuously by the Jaina philosophers of India: any criticism must be preceded by a proper and total understanding of the doctrine one tries to criticize. It is, of course, possible, though perhaps not probable, that if one *fully* understands these mystical doctrines, one would find very little in them to be critical about. One may still reasonably assume that a rational comprehension of them is possible. But my feelings is that total understanding in this case will probably be ever elusive. Using an analogy which Freud applied to his own theories, I am tempted to say that they are like the paintings of Rembrandt—a little light and a great deal of darkness.

If total understanding through rational means will always

be elusive, one may argue, why try at all? Why, indeed? It is a fact that Śrīharṣa, Nāgārjuna, and Dinnāga have been accused by fellow-Buddhists and fellow-Vedāntins of indulging in a profane and debased enterprise. The Taoist says, 'The fish trap exists because of the fish, once you have got the fish you can forget the trap.'

The above charge, I think, is mistaken on at least two counts. First, the logical arguments are useful, for they illuminate the mystical instead of deepening its mystery. In fact, the logical is indispensable (to, at least, a large number of people) for the illumination of the mystical. One needs the fish-trap if one hopes to catch the fish at all. You can kick the ladder away only when you have climbed up the wall, not before. Or, to use the analogy mentioned by Candrakīrti, one can forget the raft after one has crossed to the other shore. Second, the human mind is an incurably restless organ. One can repeat the parable of the Monkey and the Crooked Hair (where in order to prevent the monkey from engaging in mischief the master ordered him to straighten a naturally crooked hair, in which task he had since then been constantly engaged). Professor B. Scharfstein has put it very nicely:

> Who with the wit to use it (the mind) can keep it still for long? A daydreaming pianist will hammer with his fingers on invisible keys, a poet will mutter with fragmentary eloquence, a bright man will reason, quietly if he must, but impatient to express himself aloud. And just as a rationalist may sometimes break out into mystical poetry, mystics, unable or unwilling to check themselves, break out into reason, and some of them, after they have tasted the forbidden pleasure, go on enjoying it until one is led to suspect that they are anti-rational mystics by name but reasoners by nature, with the normal, unmystical lust to defeat the enemy.[24]

Thus we have to reckon with the force of the rational component of human mind. The rational component will go on performing its function even if it is only to justify the so-called 'irrational' propensities. For example, many people feel that it is not enough to have a religious faith, but that such faith requires, or must admit of, rational support. Belief in *theos* (God) is often not enough, and hence theology becomes, along

with it, a very useful enterprise. *Rasa,* or aesthetic pleasure that is derived from a poem, music, or a painting, is not always satisfying by itself. For a theory of beauty or aesthetics plays often an important role in such enjoyment. In the same way we see that the taste of mystical experience was not enough for many ancient Indians, for they fabricated or constructed the most amazing illumination of mysticism through the use of logic. They wished to comprehend rationally what they apparently experienced through mystical insight. Or, as some would like to put it, they were driven to their mystical conclusion by the force of their logic.

Let me turn now to the second concern of Professor Zaehner. Do the mystical philosophers of the East, by preaching the doctrine of an ineffable ultimate reality, blur the all-important distinction between good and evil? Do they develop a completely amoral position by asking one to transcend good and evil? In a bitter vein, Professor Zaehner stated in his last book that in the light of such an amoral philosophy of monism, it would be impossible to distinguish between a Charles Manson and Mother Theresa. The question of relation (or the lack of it) between morality and the so-called monistic mysticism is a very intricate one. Many issues have to be resolved first and more technical distinctions have to be introduced and emphasized before we can even meaningfully address ourselves to this important question. So I will not go into it here.

While I concede that the salvational aim of Indian mysticism is not always compatible with a moral aim, I must emphasize that the so-called monistic philosophy of the East certainly cannot endorse a Charles Manson, as my predecessor feared. Charles Manson's quoting of the *Bhagavadgītā* is no more surprising than the devil's quoting the Bible. In defence of monism, one can add that no Vedāntic or Buddhist philosophers of repute ever suggested that men should abandon the good-evil distinction before they have achieved Nir-

vāṇa. Rather it has always been emphasized that one cannot gain liberating knowledge without having lived a perfectly moral life. Any mystic of the past or the present will no doubt agree. The mystic claims simply that when one realizes the ultimate reality—the 'cosmic consciousness'—the good-evil distinction sloughs itself off as an inessential and unnecessary detail, for 'evil has been overcome' and without 'evil' 'good' loses its original meaning.

The above idea, as far as I can see, is not quite foreign to the Christian tradition. It was, for example, St. Augustine who rejected the Manichaean conception of an ultimate dualism of good and evil (which was probably borrowed from Zoroastrianism) and formulated his theodicy. Augustine argued that evil has no independent existence, since it is only a privation or perversion of something good. And man is said to be intrinsically good, though corruptible. The Indian mystic, however, solves the problem in a slightly different way. He argues that good exists at two levels, which we may distinguish as good_1 and good_2. What is good_1 is contrasted with evil, and at the ordinary level, dualism of good_1 and evil prevails. But good_1 and evil are also intimately related to each other. They, like light and darkness, stand together and fall together. Thus, when evil is eliminated, good_1 is also eliminated, and good_2 then makes its presence felt. This is the ultimate good which is said to be beyond good_1 and evil. When *avidyā* is destroyed, suffering or *duḥkha* vanishes itself, not because it is an illusion but because it is conditioned by *avidyā*. To use a simile: as long as there is night, darkness and light (from lamps, etc.) fight each other, but when the sun appears and destroys darkness, lamp-light, etc., are also rendered insignificant.

Thus, the mystical transcendence of good and evil does not have any immoral, moral, or even amoral sense. Each mystic (whether a Vedāntin or a Buddhist), on the other hand, has been deeply concerned with moral life in the everyday world.

He always emphasizes that there are two quite different levels of reality—the provisional or conventional, and the ultimate. Nāgārjuna says quite explicitly:[25]

> 'He who does not understand the distinction of the two levels of truth (reality), does not understand the truth of the doctrine of the Buddha.'
>
> 'Like a snake grasped at the wrong end, or a craft wrongly learnt, the emptiness doctrine, when it is wrongly understood, destroys a person of poor intelligence.'

At the everyday level of reality, the good-evil distinction is, of course, very important, indeed vital. Thus, morality is as much a concern for the mystical philosopher as it is for any non-mystical thinker.

Even the so-called illusory or fictional nature of the everyday world should not foster amorality in our everyday behaviour. For the everyday level of reality (i.e. *samvṛti)* is no less important for the mystic in his striving for salvation or *nirvaṇa*. Nāgārjuna insists:[26]

> 'The Ultimate Reality cannot be taught without recourse to everyday reality. And nirvāṇa cannot be attained without the understanding of Ultimate Reality.'

In fact, it is a common mistake—a mistake that is unfortunately being perpetuated by many today—to describe the *samvṛti,* i.e. the everyday world, as an illusion or even an appearance. It is, I think, improper to assume that the so-called appearance-reality distinction, so well-known in Western philosophy, will also hold for Nāgārjuna and Śaṅkara. Of course, it is said that the everyday world is not real. But an object can be said to be *not real* in two very different senses. The so-called object may be non-existent, and hence deserves to be called 'not real'. On the other hand, a toy gun, for example, can be said to be 'not real' because it is a toy gun. A toy elephant (to use an image of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra)* does not possess the own-nature or *svabhāva* that it is supposed to possess or that it professes to possess.

Similarly the everyday world, it is argued, does not embody the *svabhāva* or essence it professes to embody. It falls short of the ideal of *svabhāva*, and in this sense it is unreal. Thus, *saṁsāra* or *saṁvṛti* is not a mere appearance, still less an illusion — it is something that is not quite successful in embodying an own-nature, *svabhāva*.[27] It seems to be misrepresentation to call the everyday world an illusion, or identical with the Red King's dream in Alice's adventures.

Proper understanding of the distinction between *saṁvṛti* and *paramārtha*, between the everyday reality and the ultimate reality, is, as has already been emphasized, the key to the understanding of the nature of Indian mysticism. *Saṁvṛti* is not identical with illusion although it may be inclusive of that which we call illusion. Thus, some philosophers (cf. Bhāvaviveka, Prajñākaramati, etc.) try to distinguish between the true *saṁvṛti* and the false *saṁvṛti (tathya* and *mithyā*). False *saṁvṛti* refers to the illusory appearance of things (mirage, etc.). But true *saṁvṛti* is the everyday world where a spade appears as a spade and we are allowed to call a spade a spade. This is called *saṁvṛti* only because it covers and conceals the ultimate nature of the objects we see. This is justifiable since *saṁvṛti* etymologically means covering and concealing. In fact, each thing is said by the mystic to have two natures or aspects, one that is grasped by our ordinary perception and intellect, and the other that lies concealed or hidden by the first but is revealed only to the perfect wisdom or *prajñā-pāramitā*. Our worldly behaviour operates with the first nature or the first aspect, while the second is operative only in *nirvāṇa*. But the Indian mystic warns at the same time that it is the first alone that can lead us to the second. And when one penetrates the second, the previous duality of nature merges into one. That is what is called the mystic 'unity' or oneness of reality.

The everyday world is therefore vitally important to the mystic, it is important for his pursuit of *nirvāṇa*. And consequently morality is part and parcel of the same pursuit. Thus, I believe that it is possible fully to vindicate morality in mysticism, even in the monistic mysticism of the East.

Before I conclude, I wish to make some general observations about the aim and purpose of the Spalding Professorship at the University of Oxford. The express aim of the late Mr. Spalding was to bring together the world's great religions 'in closer understanding, harmony and friendship'. Professor Zaehner in his inaugural address said (p. 17): 'The only common ground is that the function of religion is to provide release. There is no agreement at all as to what it is that man must be released from. The great religions are talking at cross purposes.' While I do not disagree for a moment that the great religions of East and West differ greatly one from another, I cannot help feeling that one is over-stating the case for distinction and antagonism if one thinks that they work 'at cross purposes'. Here again there is a lesson to be learnt from the Jainas of India. The central philosophy of Jainism is sometimes described as the non-onesidedness of truth *(anekāntavāda)*. In my opinion, this very important philosophic attitude derives its force from the value the early Jainas put on *ahiṁsā* 'non-violence'. As I have already pointed out, the Jainas carried the principle of non-violence from the physical and practical plane to the intellectual plane. Thus, 'respect for the life of others' was eventually transformed into an obligatory respect for the views and beliefs of others. The Jainas claim that when two or several parties are seriously and sincerely arguing regarding the truth, it is seldom that one side is absolutely wrong, while the other side is absolutely right. The world is not divided only into black and white, for there are innumerable shades of grey in between. The Jainas contend that one should try to understand the particular point of view of each disputing party if one wishes to grasp completely the truth of the situation. The *total* truth, the Jainas emphasize, may be

derived from the integration of all different viewpoints *(nayas).*[28]

If the problem of the divergence of the world's great religions is presented to a Jaina, he will comment as follows: One can overstate the divergence and thereby undermine their common ground. This will foster antagonism and probably violence. Or, one can overstate the similarity and thereby blur the vital distinction, which will result in intellectual dishonesty and barrenness. But we need not be caught between these two extremes. Our Jaina friend will humbly ask us to remember that there are many other sides of the question besides the one we, in this particular moment, have in mind. The total truth, the Jaina claims, is ever elusive for a single individual (or a single creed) unless he happens to be omniscient. Or, following the Buddha, one might say that emphasis on the similarity and sameness will be another form of eternalism or *śāśvatavāda,* and emphasis on the ultimate difference will be a form of annihilationism *(ucchedavāda).* But a follower of the Tathāgata should avoid both extremes and follow the Middle Way.

My intention here, I wish to emphasize, is not to refute the views of my predecessors. I have tried only to add a new dimension to their thoughts by deriving lessons from my study of the Jaina and the Buddhist philosophy.

If the world's great religions do have a 'common ground', then it will be possible to define the term *religion.* But the definition of religion has proved to be a notoriously difficult task. The problem is further complicated by the existence of such non-theistic Eastern religions as Buddhism, Jainism, and Vedānta. But the difficulty of defining religion adequately is not, I think, insurmountable. An adequate definition must underline the common characteristics underlying the diverse religious traditions of East and West. If such a definition can be formulated it will already be a step towards bringing the world's great religions to what may be called a 'closer understanding'. This is not, however, the place to indulge in attempting to frame a definition. Besides, it would be too ambitious at this stage when there is much groundwork yet to be done.

I wish to make only an impressionistic suggestion.

One of the common factors in all the world's great religions is, as I see it, a belief that the unexamined life is not worth living. In this sense, then, Socrates was a religious philosopher. All great religions, it seems to me, contain a belief that a certain control of the instincts is necessary for our civilized living—a belief that the cultivation of certain positive emotions, e.g., compassion and concern for other people or other beings, is a necessary concomitant of any search for personal *nirvāṇa,* freedom or salvation. In this sense, then Yudhiṣṭhira of the Māhābhārata was an incarnation of *dharma* 'religious duty', for he lived a truly religious life, as Professor Zaehner rightly pointed out in his *Hinduism,* and refused to enter heaven, the so-called highest prize of his religious life, without the animal, a dog, that loyally followed him to the doors of heaven. This incident was, perhaps, the highest expression of the religiosity that Yuddhiṣṭhira had in him. All great religions also include a belief that purely external circumstances cannot constitute the be-all and end-all of human existence—a belief that the world we see only with our senses is not all that there can possibly be. Thus to me, to be religious means to have a humility about what else there is. Moreover, all great religions contain a belief that people can be better than they are as well as a belief that people can experience more than they do.

One may claim that any adequate definition of religion will contain, among many other things, a reference to a higher plane of existence, a 'deathless, painless' existence, or in Buddhist terms, an unconditioned existence, which is in sharp contrast with the existing conditions of life, the mechanical, the existential, the trivial, the non-final, or the non-essential world. Man's religious urge is invariably characterized by a

quest for this higher mode of existence. In Indian terminology, it would be stated as a contrast between the *paramārtha* and the *vyavahāra*, between *nirvāṇa* and *saṁsāra*. Some philosophers would call it a contrast between the spiritual and the material, between the fragile and the immortal, between the infinite and the finite. Some historians of religions have called it a distinction between the sacred and the profane. Controversy as well as scepticism about such religious concepts as God, an after-life or *nirvāṇa* centres around the question whether such a different (higher) plane of existence exists in some acceptable sense. But after many centuries of controversy it is now reasonably clear that its supposed existence can be neither proved nor disproved through our accredited means of knowledge. Even the ancient Mīmāṃsaka observed that ordinary *pramāṇas*, perception and inference, are powerless either to validate or to invalidate religious concepts, and hence any attempt in this direction would yield very little at the end.

Man's quest and concern for the sacred takes different forms and has different expressions all over the world. Hence the diversities and divergences of the world's great religions. The sociologist will probably connect this concern with the realities of the human situation, man's powerlessness and frustration concerning scarcity and uncertainty, his lack of pre-vision of, and control over, events that are crucially important to his safety, happiness, and welfare. Classical psychoanalysis will give a genetic explanation for this urge in terms of unconscious wish-fulfilment as well as in terms of a number of technical and clinical concepts such as anxiety, the defence-mechanisms, the Oedipus situation and the problems of obsessional neurosis. But again, a genetic explanation (whether sociological or psychological) of our concern for the sacred and the higher form of existence does nothing either to prove or to disprove the sacred. A comment of Ernest Jones, whom Freud described as the greatest psychoanalyst of the English

speaking world, illustrates the point nicely:

> . . . religious beliefs, whether savage, mythological or Christian, may or may not be true—in their nature they are not capable of proof or disproof—but it is highly probable that they would have arisen in their identical forms whether they were true or not . . . But we must not forget that neurosis is an expression of the same forces and conflicts that have led to the loftiest aspirations and profoundest achievements of our race, and that neurotics are often the torch-bearers of civilization. They may strain themselves in the effort, but without that effort there would be no civilization.[29]

The Vedic seer raised the question, 'Which god is really there, to whom we must offer oblation?' This shows that scepticism is as old as the birth of civilization. But so is man's attempt to comprehend rationally the religious and the mystical. Both the religious man and the rational man in our society today raise their eyebrows at the question of 'rational comprehension' of the religious and the mystical. For the rational man believes that religion is basically irrational; it is, at its best, above and beyond reason, and, at its worst, is below reason. The religious man will hesitate because, for him, religion is based on experience or on faith or on both. Hence, he would argue, it is impossible for an agnostic, who lacks any experience, either religious or mystical, to have a rational comprehension of religion or mysticism. For a man may understand the definition of drunkenness, but will never rationally understand what it *really* is to be drunk.

But I think that this is another dichotomy that my Jaina friend will advise us to avoid, for he believes that it is mistaken. Man is a rational animal, but, what is more interesting, he is not exclusively rational. Hence, he continues to search for the 'promised' land, for the 'sacred', for nirvāṇa. It has been claimed by the sociologist that human civilization is but a fabrication of a child afraid to be alone in the dark. And religion is part of that civilization. Man also has a monkey inside him, which prompts him to ask rational questions and demand rational answers. Otherwise, we would not have a Socrates, or an Aristotle, or a Buddha, or a Nāgārjuna, or a

Śrīharṣa. As my predecessor used often to say, quoting a phrase of Al-Ghazali, 'for reason is God's scale on earth'.[30]

I shall conclude, in a rather lighter vein, by referring to a few well-known metaphors. The ordinary man is probably a counter-example to the concept of Buridan's ass. We all know what Buridan's ass[31] did. He was given a choice to eat from two equal bales of hay situated at equal distance from him. But being unable to decide between the two equally balanced alternatives, he chose to starve himself to death. The main purpose of this story is to illustrate the problem of reasoned choice in the absence of preference. But my point is slightly different.

Buridan's ass was most probably a philosopher, certainly a logician. But an ordinary man even with reason chooses to act randomly under the circumstances. In fact, the ordinary man is worse off than Buridan's ass in this matter. He is torn and tormented by the conflict between the taste of 'the tree of life' and that of 'the tree of knowledge'. And reason cannot show any evaluative preference of one over the other. His condition is comparable to that of one who is placed between two equally tempting glasses of juice—one containing, say, the juice of religion and mysticism and the other that of rationality and scepticism—and being attracted to both, tries, perhaps not unreasonably, to partake a little of both. Thus, he may ask much in the same way the Vedic seer asked,

'To what god shall we offer oblation?'

'KASMAI DEVĀYA HAVIṢĀ VIDHEMA?'

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Vv. *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, Nāgārjuna. Edited by E. H. Johnston and Arnold Kunst. *Melanges chinois et bouddhiques*, Vol. IX, 1948-51, pp. 99-152.
Dr. K. Bhattacharya translated this text with Introduction and Notes 'The Dialectical Methods of Nāgārjuna' in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (D. Reidel, Dordrecht), Vol, I, No. 3, 1971. Passages quoted here are, however, from my own translation.

Kh. *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*, Śrīharṣa. Edited by Dr. Navikānta Jhā. Kashi Sanskrit Series, Chowkhamba: Varanasi, 1970.
An English translation of the Introductory portions of this text has been prepared with elaborate notes and explanation by Dr. Phyllis Granoff. The work is awaiting publication in the *Classical India Monograph Series* (D. Reidel, Dordrecht). Passages quoted here are, however, from my own translation.

1 R. C. Zaehner: *Our Savage God* (London, Collins, 1974): '. . . and in our everyday world this ambivalence can have disastrous results', p. 15.

2 Ibid., p. 294

3 Ibid., pp. 14-15

4 I am tempted to quote the passage from *Pañcatantra* (Kathāmukha, beginning with '*dvādaśabhiḥ varṣaiḥ kila vyākaraṇaṃ śrūyate*'. See F. Edgerton's *The Panchatantra Reconstructed* (A.O.S., New Haven, 1924) p. 4. The passage makes the point that before a pupil should start learning a śāstra, he must first spend twelve years in the study of grammar, etc.

5 See my 'Double Negation in Navya-nyāya', forthcoming in Festschrift for Professor D. H. H. Ingalls (D. Reidel).

6 *Mādhyamika-śāstra*, Ch. 15, verses 8, 9. (Ed. P. L. Vaidya, 1960).
We may note that the concept of 'own-nature' in Nāgārjuna's writings is almost as ambiguous as the concept of essence of Aristotle or the theory of Forms in Plato. The following comment from the *Mādhyamika-kārikā*, Ch. 15, verse 2, may be of some help:

> 'How could "own-nature" be something created? For 'own-nature' is (surely) uncreated (literally, "non-artificial" = *akṛtrima)* and independent of others as well.'

7 *Vv.*, p. 108

8 *Nyāyasūtras* 5.1.39-43 (Ed. G. Jha, Poona Oriental Series, 1939).

9 *Vv.* pp. 109-10

10 I have the following distinction of paradox and antinomy in my mind. A paradox packs a surprise, but the surprise quickly dissipates itself as we ponder the proof. This is how W. V. Quine defines what he calls 'veridical paradox'. A 'falsidical paradox', according to Quine, packs a surprise, but it is seen as a false alarm when we solve the underlying fallacy. 'An antinomy, however, packs a surprise that can be accommodated by nothing less than a repudiation of part of our conceptual heritage.' *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays*, Revised & Enlarged Edition. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1976, p. 9.

11 This is similar to the point raised by Alonzo Church regarding the Liar Paradox in review of A. Koyré's *The Liar* in *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, Vol. 12 (1946), p. 131.

12 This point is mentioned by Nicholas Rescher in 'Self-referential Statement'. See his *Topics in Philosophical Logic* (D. Reidel, Dordrecht, 1968), p. 16.

13 This point is derived from the comments of A. N. Prior. 'Fearing that nothing we fear is the case, asserting that nothing we assert is the case and so on, must be more difficult performances than we at first take them to be' (p. 74). Prior

suggests that our problem may be over with the statement of Epimenides if we do *not* suppose that it is *asserted* by him. Prior actually follows here a suggestion of John Buridan. One of John Buridan's examples was 'No proposition is negative'. According to Prior, Buridan insists that the said proposition should be classified as a 'possible' one because things could be as it signified, even though it could not possibly be true. Prior contends, '. . . it can be that no proposition is negative, though it cannot be that 'No proposition is negative" is true.' (p. 144).
See 'Epimenides the Cretan', and 'Some problems of self-reference in John Buridan', in A. N. Prior's *Papers in Logic and Ethics* (Eds. P. T. Geach & A. J. P. Kenny—London, Duckworth, 1976). The present note owes much to an informal discussion I had with my friend Professor Hans Herzberger regarding the problem of self-reference.

14 The Sanskrit word *'siddha'* literally means 'accomplished'. It can be translated either as 'validated' or 'established' depending upon the context. I have taken some liberty in translation to make the point clear.

15 Faults like *ātmāśraya, anyonyāśraya,* and *cakraka* can roughly be called varieties of vicious circle. See my *The Navya-nyāya Doctrine of Negation* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p. 82-4.

16 *Vv.*, verses 49, 50.

17 See *Nyāyasūtras* 1.2.1-3

18 See Vātsyāyana's comments under *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.1, beginning with *'vitaṇḍā tu parīkṣyate'*, p. 4 (Jha's edition).

19 The work of this author is unfortunately lost. Udayana referred to him as 'an ancient Gauḍa Naiyāyika', and so probably he hailed from Bengal. His independent view about *vitaṇḍā* has been preserved by Udayana. See my *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* p. 92 (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1977), in *A History of Indian Literature,* ed. Jan Gonda, Vol. VI, fasc.

20 See G. Tucci, 'The Hymn to the Incomparable One', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* New Series, 27, 1932, pp. 312-14.

21 It is, however, conceded that Bhavaviveka and the Svatantrika school tried to formulate a *svatantra* inference to establish the Madhyamika position (over and above the *prasanga* argument).

22 Gilbert Ryle: *Philosophical Arguments:* Inaugural Lecture at Oxford, (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1945), p. 6.

23 Ibid., p. 6. "I am not trying to prove that no other types of argument are proper to philosophy."

24 Ben-Ami Scharfstein: *Mystical Experience* (Blackwell, 1973; Penguin Book Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, 1974), p. 44.

25 *Mādhyamika-śāstra*, Ch. 24, verses 9 & 11.

26 Ibid., verse 10

27 Ibid., verses 15-19

28 See my *The Central Philosophy of Jainism: Anekāntavāda* (forthcoming, L. D. Indological Institute, Ahmedabad).

29 Ernest Jones: *What is Psychoanalysis?* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1949), p. 105

30 Zaehner, R. C. *At Sundry Times* (London, Faber & Faber), p. 12.

31 The example, according to Nicholas Rescher, does not occur in Buridan's extant writings. But it is based on an illustration in Aristotle's *De Caelo* (295b32) that became a standard illustration in the Aristotelian tradition. Rescher, however, has traced the example in its essentially ultimate form in the Arabic philosopher Ghazali and cited a passage from Averroe's Tahafut-al-Tahafut. See Rescher's essay 'Buridan, Jean' in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ed. P. Edwards), Vol I.